

REMARKS

Claims 3-7, 9-15, 18-23, and 25 are pending. Claims 8 and 16 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

I. **Claim Objections**

Claims 7 and 19 stand objected to for informal matters. In response, claims 7 and 19 have been amended as suggested.

II. **35 USC § 103**

Claims 3-7, 9-15, 18-23 and 25 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Nelson (U.S. Patent No. 5,618,602) in view of WO 96/27721. The Office Action concedes Nelson fails to teach each feature of the claims, for which purpose WO '721 is apparently cited.

The Office Action states, “Nelson fails to disclose that the at least one guiding wedge comprises a plurality of guiding wedges arranged perpendicular to the joint,” but asserts “Martensson teaches, guiding wedges 9 arranged perpendicular to the joint.” However, the Office Action fails to explain the distinction between the structures of Nelson and WO '721. In other words, the Office Action realizes Nelson does not teach the claimed feature, but the Office Action does not explain how the description on WO '721 teaches the claimed feature.

The present claims recite that the guiding wedge include “a section extending from said distal angled section to said core.” Even if the snapping webs 9 of WO '721 were “arranged” as recited, such snapping webs 9 do not have a “a section extending from said distal angled section to said core.” Thus, the snapping web 9 of WO '721 is not the equivalent of the presently claimed guiding wedge. There is neither a teaching nor suggestion in the cited art to perform such a modification.

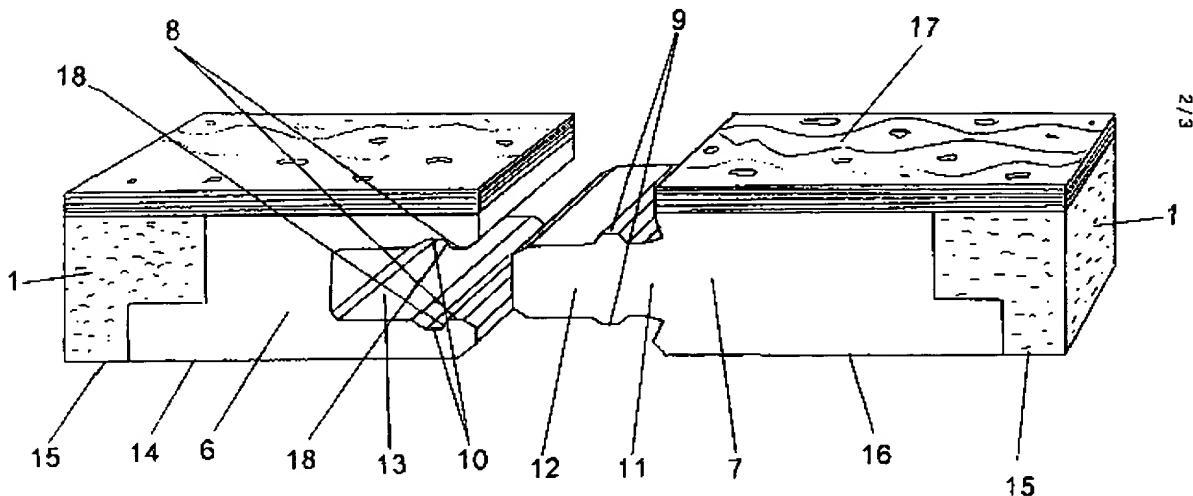
However, as previously presented, WO '721 does *not* provide any teaching, description or suggestion to provide a plurality of guiding wedges “arranged perpendicular to the extension of the joint.”

As can be seen from Fig. 2 of WO '721, the snapping wedges 9 extend (i.e., are arranged) in a direction *parallel* to the joint between the panels.

Thus, the snapping webs 9 of WO '721 cannot be "arranged" as presently claimed.

Applicants note that the Office Action actually states "The applicant argues that the

Fig. 2



Martensson guiding wedges (9) are arranged parallel to rather than perpendicular to the *boards*" (Page 8) (emphasis added). Although Applicants explained that this is a mischaracterization of both Applicants' arguments and the present claims in the previously filed amendment, and that the claims recite that guiding wedges are perpendicular to the plane defined by the *extension of the joint*, not the boards. The most recent Office Action repeats, *verbatim*, the error from the Office Action of October 21, 2005. Thus, it appears the argument (including the footnote) on page 8 of the most recently filed amendment was overlooked.

As neither Nelson nor WO '721 teaches nor suggests to provide the guiding wedges as presently claimed, Applicants respectfully submit that no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been made. Reconsideration is respectfully suggested.

III. Claim 24

The Office Action Summary lists claim 24 as being rejected. However, claim 24 was cancelled with the amendment filed on February 21, 2006. Thus, claim 24 is not pending and should not have been rejected.

IV. Response to Advisory Action

A. Claim 16

Initially, the Advisory Action notes that claim 16 "raises new issues." However, as this amendment cancels claim 16, Applicants respectfully present that this amendment does not raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search.

B. "perpendicular to the extension of the joint"

The Advisory Action asserts that the language of the claims, i.e., "wherein the guiding wedges are arranged perpendicular to the extension of the joint," is met by guiding means wherein the guiding wedges are perpendicular to the *board*, because "the claim scope does not require interpretation any narrower than that applied in the previous Office Action final rejection." As the previous Office Action mistakenly interpreted the quoted language (discussed above), reconsideration is requested. Again, Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to the clear and unambiguous language of the claims, reciting that the guiding wedges are "perpendicular to the extension of the joint" (emphasis added), i.e., not perpendicular to the board.

The Advisory Action is correct that "the applicant's argument that the limitation 'perpendicular' should be defined by the extension of the joint rather than the boards."

This is supported by the literal language of the claims, and is not open to interpretation to the contrary with regard to this application.

Moreover, the Advisory Action continues, “Limitations cannot be read into the claims from the specification.” While Applicants agree with this general statement, when Examining claims, the Examiner is not free to interpret clear and unambiguous language of the claims by effectively eliminating features thereof in order to “shoehorn” the claim into an erroneous rejection. As far back as February 2003, the claims of this application have included the feature that “the guiding wedges are arranged perpendicular to the extension of the joint,” and neither the present Examiner nor his predecessor, Ryan Flandro, have cited a single reference teaching or suggestion to rotate the snapping wedges 9 of Martensson 90°, such that they are *perpendicular to the extension of the joint*.

IV. Conclusion

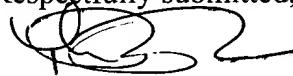
In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all objections and rejections are overcome. Thus, entry of the above amendments and passage of the application to allowance are respectfully requested.

Moreover, as at least part of the previously filed amendment was apparently not considered, Applicants respectfully submit that (in addition to the reasons explained above) Applicants should be entitled to entry of this amendment and consideration of the remarks presented herein as if the Office Action of April 25, 2006 were a non-final Office Action.

AMENDMENT AFTER FINAL REJECTION
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U.S. Appl. No. 09/910,960

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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